were **less** likely than other stations to air celebrity news or human-interest features (10% vs. 14%).

- On Balance and Accuracy: Cross-owned stations aired more than one side of the matter in roughly half of all controversial stories **(46%)** compared with only 39% in all other stations.
- **On** Enterprise: Here cross-owned stations didn't fare as well. Their scores for enterprise overall were lower. In particular, a third of all the stories on these stations involved sending a camera without a correspondent (32%), compared with one-fifth (21%) at all other stations. On the other hand, these stations relied less on syndicated wire feed material (14% vs. 19% for other stations).

It should be noted that many cross-ownership situations date back to before the FCC rules against cross-ownership were instituted in 1975 and were allowed to continue thanks to a "grandfather" clause. In many cases, these stations are operating in an environment where collaboration between co-owned TV and newspaper outlets has been "taboo" for two decades and broadcasters may have been more sensitive to the appearance of relying to heavily on their print counterparts. This concern is only now starting to wane, due in part to the symbolic impact of lessening FCC oversight and the growing strategic emphasis inside news companies on "convergence."

The data on enterprise deserves some further reflection. On its face, cross-ownership might have suggested that the joint resources of a newspaper and TV station would have freed up people to do more original work. But the fact that our sample of cross-owned stations actually scored lower on our enterprise index in general, and particularly in the area of sending out reporters to cover stories, suggests something else may be at play. It is possible that cross-owned stations actually have fewer reporters than others to send out. Or, perhaps, newspaper companies, more so than other companies, are using their TV stations **as** cash infusers to the rest of the company. It is possible that the six stations we happened to have studied were unusual. But the generalized sign of higher quality at cross-owned stations, for some reason, did not include those stations doing more enterprise.

LOCAL VERSUS NON-LOCAL OWNERSHIP

Many critics of large, chain ownership over the years have postulated that local ownership is better because the people who run the company would be more concerned with the community if they lived there. This, the argument went, would lead to more sensitive, serious and informed coverage of local concerns.

The data in our sample offer no support of this argument.

We defined a local owner as one whose headquarters is located in the metropolitan area of the station. For example, Sinclair Broadcast Group would be a local owner for its Baltimore, Maryland, station, WBFF, but not for its St. Louis station, KDNL. (We exempted the three network O&O's located in the headquarters cities of their parent corporations since historically local news is not the heart of these company's activities.)

Locally owned stations tended be just above average in quality, rather than either very good or very bad.

In all, **42%** of locally owned stations earned "B's" (compared with 33% for stations with

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out-of-town owners). Only 10% earned "A's" (compared with **16%** for non-local stations).

But they were also half **as** likely to earn **"F's" as** non-locally owned stations **(4%** vs. 8%).

Are there specific characteristics of local versus non-local ownership?

Local Owners vs. Non-Local Owners:
Local and National Topic Coverage

<u>Story</u> Topic	*Local owners*	*Non-local owners*
Local	**76%**	**81%**
National	**24**	**19**
Total	100%	100%

The data suggest there may be. Locally owned stations tended to be slightly less enterprising in our sample and, perhaps surprisingly, also tended to be less likely to cover local topics.

The locality of ownership seemed to have no significant bearing on such questions as the quality of sourcing in stories, story length, or the tendency of stations to frame stories around their larger implications.

Specifically,

- **On** Enterprise: Locally owned stations sent slightly fewer reporters to the scene **of** scheduled events such **as** trials and press conferences **(24%** of stories vs. **27%).** They aired slightly more wire feeds, corporate feeds and stories from another news organizations **(22%** of stories versus 19% for non-local). These differences, however, are small.
- **On** Loealism: Locally owned stations covered fewer local stories **(76%** vs. 81%). And they aired slightly more national and international stories without making any connection to their viewing area (15% vs. **12%** for non-local).

What might account for the finding that locally owned stations tend to avoid very low quality marks but also are less likely to be the very best? One possible explanation may lie in the pressures associated with operating in one's hometown. Perhaps having the boss nearby is a kind of inhibition, from soaring too high or too low.

Owners and family members may watch the program and are more likely to be members of local civic groups, charities, or the community social and power structure. Station management may be more likely to hear from these owners about news content. Perhaps these connections lead employees to be less inclined to reach outside of community norms or take chances. These same pressures, however, may also keep locally owned stations from dipping too low in quality, even if doing so would help profit margins.

PUBLIC VERSUS PRIVATE OWNERSHIP

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Public vs. Private Ownership
by Quality Grade

Grade	Public owner	Private owner
A	14%	18%
B	33	35
C	28	25
D	19	12
F	6	10
Total	100%	100%

Another issue embedded in the FCC debate, and even discussed among executives of some publicly owned companies, is whether private ownership allows for a greater chance of serving the public interest. The argument here, to oversimplify, is that being freed of the pressures of quarterly profit reports, focus on one's stock price, and meeting industry based measures of profitability and efficiency, would allow companies to better focus on the long-term and on quality.

Our data, based on **54** privately held stations and 118 publicly held, suggest a slightly greater tendency toward quality at private companies, though the findings are not nearly **as** strong **as** in other ownership categories.

Overall, **18%** of privately held stations in our sample earned "A's" versus **14%** for publicly held stations. And **35%** of privately held stations earned "B's" compared with **33%** for publicly held.

Private stations could also produce very poor quality. They were more inclined to "F's" (10% versus 6%)—though less inclined to "D's" **(12%** versus 19%).

The differences between these two ownership categories are much less than those we found for large versus small companies, O&O versus independently owned, and cross-owned versus others. In general, we think these differences are too small to conclusively support the argument that private ownership better serves the public interest than does public ownership.

What are the particular traits that differentiate privately versus publicly owned stations?

The differences, again, are less discernible than for other ownership categories.

Privately held stations demonstrate more of some kind *of* enterprise, for instance, and slightly less of others.

For many indicators, such **as** sourcing, focus on the important underlying trends in stories, the mix of viewpoints, there is little difference between public and private companies in our data.

Specifically:

- **On Enterprise:** Privately held stations were more likely than public company stations to send a reporter to the scene of a scheduled event **(31%** versus **25%).** They were a little less likely to air wire stories or feeds from other sources (17% versus **20%** for public). But on other indicators of enterprise, they scored slightly lower than public companies.
- **On Localism:** Privately held stations are a little more likely to cover local stories **(83%** versus **79%** for public). Publicly held stations tend a little more toward national stories that have no connection to viewing area **(14%** versus 11% for privately owned).
- **On Story Length:** Privately owned stations tended, by a small margin, to air fewer very short stories than publicly owned stations. Overall, **36%** of the stories **on**

private stations were 30-seconds or less in length, compared with **41%** on publicly owned stations.

TIMESLOT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

One question about the data is whether differences in timeslot might alter the results. Over the five years of study, we have found a consistent tendency for early evening newscasts to be stronger than late night. Generally, 5 p.m. and *6* p.m. newscasts — those preceding prime time — tend to be stronger journalistically than 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. newscasts — those following prime time. Since we compared stations at the highest-rated timeslot for news in each city — comparing 5 p.m. and *6* p.m. programs to 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. newscasts together — we wondered if that might be skewing the findings about ownership.

To find out, we decided to examine the data within timeslots — comparing late newscasts, those following prime time, to each other and early newscasts (5 p.m. and *6* p.m.) to each other.

LATE-NIGHT NEWSCASTS
Size of Corporate Owner and Quality Grade

Grade	Top10 Groups	11-25 Groups	Midsize Groups	Small Groups
A	2%	7%	*8%*	41%
B	23	16	40	*21*
C	41	41	*25*	15
D	24	20	13	17
F	10	16	14	0
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Late Newscasts

In late news, the tendency of smaller owners to produce better newscasts actually became stronger.

- The smallest owners were **20** times as likely as the largest owners and six times as likely as the next 15 largest companies to receive **"A's"** in their late news (**41%** versus **2%** at top ten, 7% at the next 15 largest, and *8%* at mid-sized).
- In late news, none of the smallest owners earned "F" grades, compared with at least 10% in the other size groups.

Early Newscasts

Earlier in the day, we did see a change. Here the stations in the largest ownership category tended to outperform the smaller companies.

- **A** third of top ten owned stations (**32%**) received an "A" in the early hours, versus a fifth of the smallest owned stations (**20%**), a quarter (**24%**) of mid-sized and 17% from the top twenty-five.
- The biggest company stations were also more likely to receive "B's" than smaller stations at 5 p.m. and *6* p.m.

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EARLY-EVENINGNEWSCASTS
Size of Corporate Owner and Quality Grade

Grade	Top 10 Groups	11-25 Groups	Midsize Groups	Small Croups
A	32%	17%	24%	20%
B	47	51	41	43
C	14	14	19	19
D	7	12	16	12
F	0	6	0	6
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

■   The largest owned stations also received no **"F's"** at this hour—along with the mid-sized—ompared with *6%* of both the smallest and the second-largest group of companies.

The differences are important. For one thing, it means that while smaller companies outperform larger ones overall, this is not true across the board.

Second, larger companies are capable of producing higher quality newscasts. **Yet** for some reason, they often fail to do that when the most people are watching.

Some broadcasters believe that late news needs to be quite different than early news—faster paced, more headlines, more quick stories. Yet the data we have gathered and interviews we have done with news professionals make it clear that there is a difference of opinion about this.

The research also clearly finds that late newscasts generally are losing more viewers than early newscasts, and the lower quality in general of these late newscasts may certainly be an important factor.

If it is conventional wisdom among some broadcast professionals that late news needs to be flashier, the numbers **across** the industry seem to suggest this is a mistake.

What does all this mean about the size of ownership? It suggests quality is not out of reach for large companies. There is nothing endemic, in other words, that prohibits these larger companies from better serving the public interest. Indeed, some of the very best newscasts we have seen come from some large companies in early timeslots.

But these companies, with broader resources than their smaller competitors, have chosen for whatever reasons not to provide that quality to citizens across the day, and even when the largest number of viewers are watching. The number of big companies that choose to produce quality in late night **(2%)** is strikingly low.

Other Ownership Categories and Timeslot

What about other categories of ownership at different timeslots? Here the data are less helpful. The sample, for instance, includes only four O&O's in the early timeslot and seven locally owned stations in the early timeslot. Those sample sizes are too small to draw any conclusions from. The same was true for cross-ownership stations.

DNERSITY AND OWNERSHIP

The PEJ study over the last five years also examined the diversity of sources in local news by race and ethnicity. Who was represented on camera **as** experts, **for** instance, versus perpetrators of crimes?

This data on diversity has never been released before. Diversity is not a factor in a station's quality score and thus **was** not a component of the earlier Project for Excellence in

Journalism Local TV Study. We collected the data with the intention of releasing it at a later date in conjunction with another analysis. We still plan on that. However, the FCC has indicated that diversity is one of the subjects it considers relevant to its inquiry. In light of that, we decided to release whatever findings we had about ownership diversity right now.

Does the size of the company have any impact on the diversity **of** sources?

The answer appears to be no.

Across ownership size, O&O versus affiliate, local versus non-local, and cross-owned stations versus others, we saw little difference in the presence of minorities on camera according to the type of station owner.

This is not to say everything in the area of diversity in local news is fine. Overall, only 12% of all stories included a minority on camera as the subject of a story, **an** expert or **a** person on the street.

Another two percent of stories featured minorities **as** victims of crime or suspected perpetrators of crime.

Across the five-years of data, moreover, certain subjects and persons were strikingly absent. In 23,806 stories analyzed, for instance, only .2 percent, or 32 stories, concerned the poor. Only .3 percent of stories, or **57** overall, concerned the elderly.

By contrast, more than 500 were stories about celebrities.

OWNERSHIP AND RATINGS

Does one type of owner tend to succeed better in ratings than another?

The study does not look at ratings in their simplest form, but measures economic success by looking at ratings trends: is a newscast's audience growing or shrinking? We do so by collecting three years of ratings—12 ratings books—and developing a trend line.

Rulings Performance and Size of Corporate Owner

Ratings Trend	Top 10 Groups	11-25 Groups	Midsize Groups	Small Groups
Improving	50%	41%	27%	40%
Flat	18	15	19	30
Declining	32	44	54	30
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Here we found that ownership type does seem to play a part in the ratings trends of stations.

Overall, positive ratings trends were more likely at the biggest companies, O&O's, out-of-towners, and publicly owned companies.

Interestingly, this is not the list of owners who produce the best quality.

For whatever reasons, the very largest companies have a greater ability to generate positive ratings trends —r a lower tolerance for negative ratings trends—than do smaller companies. But they also have a much higher tolerance for producing low quality.

This tendency is at odds with the overall findings of the Project's study of local television news over the last five years. That study found that quality was the path *most* likely to lead **to** ratings success.

The ability of larger companies to generate ratings success while producing lower-quality content thus raises another concern if the ownership rules are lifted.

It suggests allowing large corporations to own more and more stations would encourage

lower quality in local television news. These companies already show less of a commitment to quality, and economies of scale raise the possibility they will extend this format to new acquisitions.

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APPENDIX 1

The Criteria of Quality

How the definition of quality was developed.

To develop the criteria of quality, The Project in 1998 assembled a Design Team of 14 respected local television news professionals--managers, reporters, anchors, producers and station group heads-- from a diverse cross section of companies and regions around the country. (see Design Team in Appendix III). Through survey questionnaires and long-form open-ended discussion, they isolated five basic nonnative qualities that all local newscasts should provide to citizens in their community, a set of minimum requirements.

Those basics were:
- Cover the whole community
- Be significant and informative
- Demonstrate enterprise and courage
- Be fair, balanced and accurate
- Be authoritative
- Be highly local

A team of academics and professional content analysts then devised a simple and highly replicable methodology for measuring these attributes. Stations then were given points for how well they scored on each variable story by story—except for the variable on covering the whole community. Here is a summary of the design team's ideas and how they're measured.

Cover the Whole Community

Every member of the Design Team cited as a preeminent idea that a newscast should cover and reflect the community in its totality. No topic should be considered off limits, they said, and no topic was more important or less important than another. Crime, for instance, was not less important than government. The problem is what local TV "doesn't cover." To assess how much of the community a newscast covers, the study counts all the different topics a newscast covers and divides them, using a ratio, by the number of stories aired. The greater the range of topics, the better the index.

Be Significant and Informative

Newscasts should be significant and informative—as well as interesting — the Design Team agreed. To assess this, the study coded each story for the degree to which it touched on underlying themes, ideas, trends or issues it raised. Did the story focus on an underlying issue raised by the incident? Or was the story limited to the incident itself? Was the story about a major event? *Or* did it focus on a rather common, everyday incident, without drawing out its larger significance. The focus of the story was treated on a scale. Issues of public malfeasance are considered more important than stories about celebrities.

Enterprise

Being gutsy, providing depth and context, showing initiative, and demonstrating enterprise **are** also prime values. This variable measures bow much effort went into creating the story. Was it a station-initiated investigation, interview, or series? Was the station responding to spontaneous or pre-arranged events? Did the station send a reporter to the event, or just a camera? Was the story simply taken from the news wire or a feed from another source, or was it based on rumors or gossip? The more enterprise

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demonstrated, the higher the score.

Fairness, balance and accuracy

To assess these qualities, the study employed two simple measurements of sourcing. First, it counted how many sources were cited in each story on the premise that a story with more sources was more likely to be accurate and fair. Second, the study counted how many points of view were contained in any story that involved a dispute or controversy — just one, mostly one, or a mix of more than one point of view. . Stories presented as undisputed (a fire, the weather) were noted separately. Together, the number of sources and the number of points of view provided a measure of fairness, balance and accuracy.

Authoritativeness

To assess this attribute, the study examined the level of expertise of each source cited in the story. Expertise differed given the topic of the story. **A** qualified brain surgeon would be a credentialed expert on a story about brain surgery. But a person on the street would be a qualified expert on a story about public reaction to President Bush's latest speech. This variable notes whether the source on the given topic was a credentialed expert, impartial data, the major actor in the story, an unnamed source, or finally whether no source was cited.

Localism

Because being local stood out along with covering the whole community and being accurate and fair as primary values for the design team, the study measured the local connection of each story. Did the story affect citizens in the whole area, important institutions in the area, major demographic or geographic groups in the area, smaller subgroups? Or was it interesting but with no direct connection to the community?

Additional Variables

Presentation: The study also codes stories, though allotting minimal points, for presentation. Was the story understandable or not? Only a fraction of stories were rated as incomprehensible, and this variable had little impact on station scores.

Sensationalism: The study, finally, also noted whether stories were sensational, which was defined as replaying video or graphics beyond the point that added new information. This variable, too, was allotted minimal points, and **so** few stories were rated as sensationalized that it generally had minimal impact on station scores

Additional Thoughts on Quality

The Design Team did not think all stories should be alike. **A** story about big ideas might get more points than one about a commonplace event, but any story done well scored high. Stations that covered a lot of topics well scored the highest.

What didn't win points is notable. Topic is considered neutral. **A** crime story might score as high as a science piece. Stories earn no points for length. Production techniques are considered tools and are not rated. The study avoids rating subjective qualities such as tone or negativity.

These variables amounted to counting the basics of broadcasting. If one does not agree with the

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design team's frankly quite basic "values," it is still possible to learn from these measurements. The values mainly note how stories were put together. One can ignore the quality scores, and simply track which newscast characteristics audiences respond to via the ratings data.

APPENDIX 11

STATION GROUPS

The original sample was established on the basis of markets and households, not on the saturation of ownership. Thus, the ownership sample for this study is a by-product of the original sample. In addition, the study is not meant as a commentary on the quality of any one station or ownership group, but rather is meant to be illustrative of the tendencies of various ownership categories as a whole.

Top 10 Station Groups
* = Included in Ownership Study
1. Viacom*
2. Fox*
3. Paxson
4. NBC*
5. Tribune*
6. ABC*
7. Univision
8. Gannett*
9. Hearst-Argyle*
10. Trinity

*=Included in Ownership Study
11. Sinclair*
12. Belo*
13. Cox*
14. Clear Channel
15. Pappas
16. Scripps*
17. Raycom*
18. Meredith*
19. Post-Newsweek*
20. Media General*
21. Shop at Home
22. LIN*
23. Young*
24. Emmis*
25. Entravision

Top 11-25 Station Groups
On station group rankings, see Dan Trigoboff, "Less is more as Viacom retakes top spot," Broadcasting & Cable, Apr. **8, 2002.**

Midsize Groups Included in Ownership Study
Allbritton, Bahakel, Citadel, Cosmos, Evening Post, Fisher, Freedom, Grapevine, Gray, Hubbard, Journal, McGraw-Hill, Morris, New York Times, Quorum.

Small Groups Included in Ownership Study
Bonneville, Dix, Griffin, Jefferson-Pilot, Landmark, Manship, Media Venture, Northern, Sunbeam, Valley, Zaser-Longston.

APPENDIX III

Methodology

The local television news project was begun in **1998** in order to study one of the most popular yet unexamined forms of American journalism—the half-hour local television news broadcast. Using criteria established by a team of industry professionals, methodologies were created for analysis of these newscasts, and for the establishment of commercial success measurements.

Market selection was performed based on Nielsen Media Research market rankings. Markets were grouped into four quartiles on the basis of the number of television households in each. Markets were then chosen randomly within each quartile, after stratification in order to ensure geographic diversity. In certain cases additional markets were rolled over in order to track performance over time. Within each market, the highest-rated half-hour timeslot for news was studied. The project's timeframe sample remained standardized each year; it consisted of two weeks of half-hour newscasts, one week during sweeps, and one week during the regular season.

Over time, these numbers grew to a considerable volume. Over five years, the project analyzed more than **33,000** stories, providing measurements on at least **30** separate variables for each—more than 1,000,000 pieces of data in all.

The project design included **50** markets—nearly one-fourth of the nation's **210** television markets, covering 60% of all television households nationwide. Each year was treated as a separate study, and by this standard, the final sample comprises **242** stations. However, due to the need to study changes in newscasts over time, some markets were rolled over from year to year. Accordingly, multiple markets and stations were studied more than once. **Thus,** the actual number of stations studied totaled **154.**

For each annual study, Nielsen data from the 12 preceding "ratings books" (representing three years of viewership) were the basis for the calculation of station trends re: commercial success. For newscasts from **1998** through **2002,** information was compiled on ratings and share. Findings on the relationships between quality criteria and ratings and share are based on five years of data.

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Markets	20	19	8	14	17
Stations	61	59	26	43	53
Stones	8557	8107	3827	5957	7423

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CODING METHODOLOGY

TAPING, SCREENING, AND INCLUSION

Each year, the designated news broadcasts were taped by local researchers in each of the selected markets.   They were instructed to tape Monday through Friday broadcasts for a primary and a secondary sweeps week, and a primary and a secondary non-sweeps week. In all cases, primary days were used, unless unavailable due to preemption or taping error. In those cases, broadcasts from the secondary taping period were substituted, making every effort to match the appropriate day of the week.

Each half-hour broadcast was initially screened and precoded in its entirety by a single coder. The precoding process confirmed the date/timeslot of each broadcast and identified and timed individual stories. Per the instructions of the design team, recurring sports and weather spots were merely classified and timed; *regular sports* and *weather segments were not part of any additional coding and are not reflected in any of the analysis or totals presented in this study.*

STORY CODING AND SCORING

Broadcasts were coded in their entirety by a single coder, via multiple story viewings. Working with a standardized codebook and coding rules, the process began with *inventory variables,* capturing information about broadcast date, market, station, network affiliation, etc. The second part of the coding scheme consisted of *recordable variables,* including story length, actors, and topics. The final section of the coding scheme contained the *rateable variables.* These were the measurements identified by the design team as quality indicators. The range in maximum possible points reflects the hierarchical value of each value as per quantitative analysis of the design team's input. Each rateable variable was assigned both a code and a point score.

Rateable Variables	Maximum Possible Points
Story Focus/Depth	10
Story Enterprise Level	8
Story Comprehensiveness via Credible Sources	9
Story Balance Via Multiple Sources	5
Story Balance Via Multiple Viewpoints	5
Story Visuals/Sensationalism	3
Story Professionalism/Presentation	2
Story Community Relevance	8

The *score-per-story* represents points earned via the rateable variables.

BROADCAST SCORING
Per the design teams directives, no story points were earned for topics; that is, no one topic was considered more important than another. Instead, the *score-per-broadcast* was calculated to reward stations for topic diversity, taking into account both the number of stories presented, and allowing for the additional minutes often added in post-prime timeslots. For each news broadcast, a story:topic ratio was calculated by dividing the number of stories by the number of topics. That ratio was then converted to a broadcast multiplier, as per the following ranges:

Ratio Ranee	Broadcast Multiplier
1.00- 1.75	**2.00**
1.76 - 2.25	**1.66**
2.26 - 2.75	**1.33**
2.76 or higher	1.00

Next, the broadcast's scores-per-story were totaled, then divided by the number of stories, **to** reach an *average score-per-sfoy.* The appropriate multiplier was then applied to the average score-per-story to reach the *daily broadcast score.* Finally, each station's 10 daily broadcast scores were totaled to reach the *aggregafe station score.* The aggregate score was then matched with ratings information to arrive at the final letter grade for each station.

INTERCODER RELIABLITY
Intercoder reliability measures the extent to which two coders, operating individually, reach the same coding decisions. For this project, the principal coding team was comprised of six individuals, who were trained as a group. One coder was designated as the control coder, and worked off-site for the duration of the project. Each year, at the completion of the general coding process, the on-site coders, working alone and without access to the control coder's work, recoded one-third of the broadcasts completed by the control coder. Over the course of the project, daily scores were found to be reliable within **+/- 0.67** points per day, as per the comparative daily broadcast scores of general coders vs. the control coder.

YEAR	INTERCODER MEASUREMENT
1998	**+/- 0.79**
1999	**+/- 0.53**
2000	**+/- 0.78**
2001	+/- **0.74**
2002	**+/- 0.49**

DATA ANALYSIS

Selection and Inclusion
Analysis in this report is based on the most recent appearance of a station within the five-years of the project. In those cases where a market was included one year in an early-evening timeslot, and one year in a post-primetime timeslot, as dictated by the project methodology, both appearances are included in this analysis. Via this selection criteria, this analysis is based on **23,806** news stories that were broadcast on 172 stations.

Data Consolidation and Weighting
Data was weighted so that in analysis, each station counts for one case regardless of the total numbers of stories each station has represented in the dataset. The weight for all stories for any

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particular station is simply $1/n$, where n is the number of stories.

For example, if Station A has **40** stories in the dataset, each story would have a weight of $1/40 = 0.025$. If Station B had 100 stories, each of those stories would have a weight of $1/100 = 0.010$. Therefore, the two stations will have the identical impact on any statistics based on a combination of their stories.

Ownership Category Assignment

In order to analyze quality and performance **as** part of ownership categories, codes were assigned to each station, for each category, following the rules outlined herein.

Size of Corporate Owner:

Station owners were divided into four categories, first on the basis of television audience reach, and second on the basis of the number of stations owned. Using **FCC** criteria, the 25-largest station groups were isolated and divided according to the Top 10, and then the following fifteen-largest groups. All remaining station owners were divided into two categories: corporations owning four stations or more, and corporations or individuals owning three stations or fewer. Due to constant shifts in population (and thus, individual market populations), as well as a vigorous market for broadcast properties, it is nearly impossible to obtain audience reach data for any entities other than the largest companies. The decision to divide companies on the basis of the number of stations owned was made because companies with stations in multiple markets face technical and management challenges such as syndication deals, the digital transition, and central casting that owners concentrated in only one or two cities do not have to deal with.

Cross-Ownership:

Stations were considered part of a cross-ownership situation if their corporate parent owned a daily publication located in the same television market (Nielsen Designated Market Area) at the time of the original local TV study.

Local vs. Non-local Ownership

Stations were considered locally-owned if the company which owns the station was headquartered in the same television market; or, in the case of stations owned by individuals or families, if the station's owner(s) resided in the same market. The three network O&O's located in the headquarters cities of their parent corporations we eliminated from this category since historically local news is not the heart of these company's activities.

Network vs. Affiliate Ownership

Stations were considered network O&O's if they were both owned and operated by one of the four major broadcast networks, i.e., ABC, CBS, FOX, or NBC.

Public vs. Private Ownership:

Stations were considered publicly-held if they were either (a) owned by a company traded on a public stock exchange or (b) owned by a company which independently issues publicly-available stock, even if that company is a subsidiary of a privately-held corporation (e.g., Hearst-Argyle Television). If a broadcast company is a subsidiary of a privately held company it was considered privately held, even if other corporate units of the holding company are publicly traded (e.g., **Cox** Broadcasting).

The Design Team

The criteria for judging quality in local TV news were developed by a design team of local TV news

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professionals in 1997. The team consisted of:

- John Cardenas, news director, WBNS, Columbus, Ohio.

- John Corporon, Board of Governors, Overseas Press Club.

- Randy Covington, former news director, WIS, Columbia, S.C.

- Carl Gottlieb, managing editor, Sinclair Broadcast Group, Hunt Valley, Md.

- Marty Haag, former executive vice president, A.H. Belo.

- Alice Main, former executive producer, WLS, Chicago.

- Gordon Peterson, principal anchor, WUSA, Washington, D.C.

- Jose Rios, vice president of news, KTTV, Los Angeles.

- Dan Rosenheim, news director, KPIX, San Francisco.

- Kathy Williams, news director, KRIV, Houston.

- Gary Wordlaw, general manager, KSTW, Tacoma, Wash.

The Academic Team

A scholar team of academic researchers helped to develop methodology in order to apply the criteria to measuring newscasts. This team consisted of:

- Marion Just, Ph.D., Professor of political science at Wellesley College

- Lee Ann Brady of Princeton Survey Research Associates

- Michael Robinson, Ph.D., formerly of Georgetown University

- Ann Crigler, Ph.D., director of the Jesse M. Unruh Institute of Politics at the University of Southern California

- Sherrie Mazingo, Ph.D., of the University of Minnesota.

Affiliations are provided for identification only.

dine 1: Size of Corporate Owner and Local Ownership

Total Number of Stations = 172; Total Number of Stories = 23,806

	Total	Size of Corporate Owner				Local Ownership
		Top 10 Groups (N = 65)	11-25 Groups (N = 47)	Midsize Groups (N = 37)	Small Groups (N = 23)	Locally-owned** N = 18)
QUALITY GRADE						
A	15%	11%	11%	17%	**31%**	10%
B	33	31	**31**	40	34	42
C	27	32	30	22	17	28
D	17	19	16	15	15	16
F	8	7	12	6	3	4
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
RATINGS PERFORMANCE						
Improving ratings trend	41%	50%	41%	27%	40%	23%
Flat ratings trend	19	18	15	19	30	28
Declining ratings trend	40	32	44	54	30	49
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
SIGNIFICANCE						
Focus on ideas, issues, or significant trends	15%	14%	14%	16%	16%	14%
Focus on local institutions/malfeasance	10	10	10	10	10	9
Focus on monumental or unusual events	11	12	11	9	9	10
Focus on political strategy	6	6	6	6	8	6
Focus on breaking events	2	2	2	1	1	1
Focus on everyday incidents/crimes	42	42	42	44	42	45
Focus on human interest/pop cult./scandal	14	14	15	13	14	15
Other	*	*	*	1	*	*
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
ENTERPRISE						
Investigations, interviews, and news series	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%
Spontaneous event coverage	21	22	21	21	21	22
Prearranged event covered w/ reporter	27	24	25	33	28	24
Prearranged event covered wio reporter	22	22	23	22	21	21
Wire/feed, other news org., VNRs	19	22	21	13	19	22
Other	5	4	4	5	5	5
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
LOCAL RELEVANCE						
Emergency information	*	*	*	*	*	*
National story with local impact explained	**5%**	**5%**	4%	3%	4%	3%
Story affecting main viewing area	36	34	35	41	39	37
Story affecting local subgroup or institution	25	24	25	27	24	24
Nat'l/int'l. story w/ no local impact	13	15	14	8	12	15
Feature story, no local impact	21	22	22	21	21	21
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

SOURCE AUTHORITATIVENESS

Expert source **or** reference to serious data	24%	23%	22%	25%	26%	23%
Main subject of story	29	29	25	32	31	28
Person-in-the-street	13	14	13	12	13	13
Anonymous sources/passing references	21	21	22	**18**	22	23
Undisputed stories (crimes, accidents, etc.)	16	16	17	15	15	18
No sources	9	**8**	**9**	9	7	8
Other	9	**8**	11	7	7	9

Total will exceed 100% due to multiple response

BALANCE OF SOURCES**

Two or more sources	30%	31%	29%	29%	31%	28%
One source	28	28	25	33	30	27
Only passing references/anonymous sources	34	34	36	31	33	36
No sources	8	7	10	7	6	9
Total	100%	100%	**100%**	**100%**	100%	100%

BALANCE OF VIEWPOINTS**

Mix of views	39%	42%	40%	35%	37%	36%
Mostly one view, w/ ref to other side	13	14	13	12	13	12
All of one view	48	44	47	53	50	52
Total	100%	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	100%

STORY LENGTH

Up to 20 seconds	16%	17%	**18%**	12%	12%	15%
21 to 30 seconds	24	24	24	25	21	23
31 seconds to 1 minute	27	26	25	29	31	28
1 minute, 1 second to 2 minutes	15	14	15	**18**	16	14
2 minutes, 1 second or longer	18	19	**18**	16	20	20
Total	100%	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

** Non-applicable and non-controversial stories removed; N = 17,769,

**Not locally
owned
(N = 151)**

16%
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26
17
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41

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work Ownership, Cross-Ownership, Public/Private Ownership

Total Number of Stations = 172; Total Number of Stories = 23,806

		Network Ownership		Cross-Ownership		
	Total	**O&O stations (N = 34)**	**Affiliate stations (N = 138)**	**Cross-owned station (N = 6)**	**No cross-ownership (N = 166)**	**Public owner (N = 118)**
QUALITY GRADE						
A	15%	11%	16%	36%	14%	14%
B	33	27	35	36	33	33
C	27	38	25	10	28	28
D	17	24	15	18	17	19
F	8	0	9	0	8	6
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
RATINGS PERFORMANCE						
Improving ratings trend	41%	46%	41%	18%	42%	44%
Flat ratings trend	19	17	19	18	19	16
Declining ratings trend	40	37	40	64	39	40
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
SIGNIFICANCE						
Focus on ideas, issues, significant trends	15%	14%	15%	18%	14%	14%
Focus on local institutionslmalfeasance	10	10	10	12	10	10
Focus on monumental or unusual events	11	12	10	7	11	11
Focus on political strategy	6	6	6	5	6	6
Focus on breaking events	2	2	1	2	2	2
Focus on everyday incidents/crimes	42	43	43	45	42	42
Focus on human interest/pop cult./scandal	14	13	15	10	14	15
Other	*	*	*	1	1	*
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
ENTERPRISE						
Investigations, interviews, and news series	6%	5%	6%	4%	6%	6%
Spontaneous event coverage	21	22	21	19	22	22
Prearranged event covered w/ reporter	27	20	28	25	27	25
Prearranged event covered w/o reporter	22	23	22	32	21	22
Wirelfeed, other news org., VNRs	19	25	18	14	19	20
Other	5	5	5	6	5	5
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
LOCAL RELEVANCE						
Emergency information	*	*	*	1%	*	*
National story with local impact explained	5%	5%	4%	4	4%	5%
Story affecting main viewing area	36	33	37	36	37	35
Story affecting loc. subgroup or institution	25	24	25	26	25	25
Nat'l/int'l story w/ no local impact	13	17	12	10	13	13
Feature story, no local impact	21	21	22	23	21	22
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

SOURCE AUTHORITATIVENESS

Expert source or reference to serious data	2	23%	24%	21%	24%	23%
Main subject of story		29	29	26	29	28
Person-in-the-street		14	13	14	13	14
Anonymous sources/passing references		25	20	24	21	21
Undisputed stories (crimes, accidents, etc.)		16	16	16	16	16
No sources		9	9	*6*	9	9
Other		8	9	**12**	**8**	9

Total will exceed **100%** due tn multiple response

BALANCE OF SOURCES*

Two or more sources	3ı	29%	30%	31%	30%	31%
One source		26	29	26	28	21
Only passing referenceslanon sources		38	33	34	34	34
No sources		**7**	8	9	8	8
Total	10ı	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

BALANCE OF VIEWPOINTS*

Mix of views	3	41%	39%	46%	39%	41%
Mostly one view, wl ref. to other side		15	13	12	13	13
All of one view		44	48	42	48	46
Total	10ı	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

STORY LENGTH

Up to 20 seconds	1	15%	16%	18%	16%	17%
2 1 to 30 seconds		25	23	25	23	24
31 seconds to 1 minute		21	21	23	21	25
1 minute, 1 second to 2 minutes		14	16	12	16	15
2 minutes, 1 second or longer		19	18	22	18	19
Total	10ı	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

* Nan-applicable and non-controversial stories removed; N = 11,169.

Private owner (N=54)
18%
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Criteria: Audience Reach and # of Stations Owned

Rank	Group	% of TV Households Reached (with UHF discount)*	% of TV Households Reached (without UHF discount)*	Number of Stations Owned
1	Viacom	40%	45%	39
2	Fox	38%	45%	35
3	Paxson	34%	65%	69
4	NBC	30%	34%	13
5	Tribune	29%	38%	23
6	ABC	24%	24%	10
7	Univision	21%	40%	33
8	Gannett	18%	18%	22
9	Hearst-Argyle	16%	18%	34
10	Trinity	16%	32%	23
11	Sinclair	15%	25%	62
12	Belo	13%	14%	19
13	cox	10%	10%	15
14	Clear Channel	9%	**13%**	35
15	Pappas	8%	13%	20
16	Scripps	8%	10%	10
17	Raycom	8%	10%	34
18	Meredith	7%	9%	11
19	Post-Newsweek	7%	7%	6
20	Media General	7%	9%	20
21	Shop **At** Home	7%	14%	5
22	LIN TV	6%	7%	24
23	Young	6%	6%	13
24	Emmis	6%	7%	15
25	Entravision	6%	12%	18

Based
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